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A

VINDICATION

OF THE

ADDRESS

TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,

ON THE USE OF

WEST INDIA PRODUCE.

WITH SOME

OBSERVATIONS AND FACTS RELATIVE TO THE SITUATION OF SLAVES.

IN REPLY TO

A FEMALE APOLOGIST FOR SLAVERY.

By RICHARD HILLIER,

FORMERLY A SAILOR IN THE WEST INDIA TRADE.

From Hardneſs of Heart and Blindneſs of Mind, good Lord, deliver us.

LONDON:

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1791.

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LETTER, &c.

MADAM,

A FEW days ago, your pamphlet was put into my hands. Having rejected the produce of the Weſt Indian ſugar cane ever ſince parliament thought proper to turn a deaf ear to the ſupplications of the nation, in behalf of the injured Africans, I rejoiced to find that the propriety of purchaſing commodities, obtained by a ſyſtematic courſe of legal oppreſſion, was in a fair way of being inveſtigated; but I little thought that, in a nation tenacious of its liberty, which had given birth to a Macauley, a Barbauld, or a Williams, I ever ſhould have found a female apologiſt for ſlavery. Had not ſome general idea of the deceitfulneſs of the heart put me upon my guard, I could not have imagined that the holy ſcriptures would have been quoted in ſupport of villainy and fraud. People are ſometimes the unwilling inſtruments of accelerating general good: you may have the pleaſure of reflecting hereafter, that the diſcuſſion you promoted was fatal to your cauſe. In order to ſecure the attainment of ſo deſirable an end, I ſhall diſcuſs the doctrines you have laid down, as conciſely as I am able. Should I, in the

courſe of argument, treat them, or their author, with too little reſpect, my excuſe will be, that when writing againſt cruelty it is natural for me to forget, that I am writing to a woman. At your firſt off-ſet, you take care to inform us, " That you are not ſo devoid of the feelings of humanity, or Chriſtian principles, as to wiſh ſlavery and oppreſſion to any individual of the human race." It was kind in you to tell the world of your humanity and your Chriſtianity; as, without ſome ſuch friendly hint, no exertion of human ſagacity could have diſcovered that you poſſeſſed any thing like the humanity of the eighteenth century, or the Chriſtianity of the New Teſtament. But if you are *really* an enemy to ſlavery, why do you plead in its defence? You are at ſome pains to inform us of its great antiquity. You tell us that it was regularly carried on when Jacob's ſons ſold their brother. We believe it was before that time. We believe,

" Proud Nimrod firſt the bloody chace began:
" A mighty hunter, and his prey was man!"

But if the antiquity of ſlavery ſtamp it with dignity, how honourable is murder! for, in the days of our firſt parents, Cain roſe up againſt Abel, his brother, and ſlew him. As to what was tolerated among the Jews, it is not of ſufficient importance to our preſent queſtion to merit much attention; as, if it proves any thing, it proves, that as they were permitted to enſlave all nations, the claim of us poor Engliſhmen to liberty, is contrary to the revealed will of heaven. Your huſband ſhould alſo be informed that polygamy is very ancient, that it was univerſal at the time the law was given to Iſrael, that it was in uſe among the Jews, and that, like ſlavery, it continues among that people in various parts of the world to this day. Should the reduction of your theory to practice, produce any family uneaſineſs, you are not ignorant, that Moſes ſuffered his diſciples, to write bills of divorcement, and to put away their wives.

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The Romans, you inform us, " with all their boaſted liberty, practiſed ſlavery." And it is alſo certain, that, with all their boaſted knowledge, they practiſed the moſt ſtupid idolatry. Theſe facts only prove that ignorance of liberty, and ignorance of piety, go hand in hand. Having eſtabliſhed the antiquity of ſlavery, you exultingly exclaim, " A cuſtom thus ancient,—thus univerſal,—is it not more a matter of ſurpriſe, that it ſhould ſo long have ſubſided in ſo many parts of the world, than that it ſtill continues the ſcourge of Africa?" No: Rather let the heavens wonder, and the earth be aſtoniſhed, that, while we are ſurrounded with ſo many inſtances where the name of Chriſt has reached the ear, we find ſo few where his religion has reached the heart; and that there ſhould ſtill exiſt men, who, while they pretend to love their neighbour as themſelves, yet ſtrain every nerve to detain him in perpetual bondage. This, *we are required to believe*, is not your caſe; you only reprobate the doctrine of the addreſs, as " propoſing means inadequate to its end. And recommending a real evil on the vague ſuppoſition that good may come." Whether the means propoſed by the author of the addreſs, are adequate to their end or not, remains to be proved. And, with reſpect to the evil he recommends, we ought to have been informed, whether it is a natural or moral evil. As it breathes nothing but univerſal good-will to men, and contains no avowed ſentiment inimical to Deity, if any evil is propoſed it muſt be a natural evil: and we are juſtified in doing that, in order to ſecure a greater good. If not, why did you marry, and expoſe yourſelf to the probability of dying in child-birth? Or why do people in general ſubmit to the amputation of a diſeaſed limb? Are not the riſk of death and amputation in themſelves evils?

We are next told, that, " The author's calculation of the number of murders muſt certainly be exaggerated, as by the late regulation of the number in proportion to the ſhip's tonnage, and the appointment of ſurgeons, muſt

muſt needs prevent a great deal of the evils he mentions." Now would it not have been a little more modeſt juſt to have pointed out where a man's calculations were wrong, than to aſſert, "They muſt certainly be exaggerated, merely *becauſe* they muſt? And ſhould not you, who ſhudder at the thought of paſſing by a ſugar-plum as a real evil, have given us an exact ſtatement of the ratio of murder we might commit, without tranſgreſſing the limits of your curious humanity? Has your benevolent parliament regulated the quantity of bad weather the ſhips are to meet with on the middle paſſage? Have the ſapient ſkulls of legiſlators deviſed a mode by which they can prevent a ſhip from ſinking, when ſhe ſprings a leak? Are your ſurgeons of Guineamen ſuch very clever fellows, above all the profeſſion, that they can cure grief, and fear, and the effects of foul atmoſphere? If you cannot anſwer theſe queſtions in the affirmative, tell us by what diſpenſation from a God of mercy, you conſign juſt men and innocent children to a floating hell; or elſe relinquiſh your impious claim to Chriſtianity. You inform us that, "It can be no more the intereſt of a planter to ſtarve or murder his ſlave, than it is of a farmer to kill his horſe." This ſtale argument à priori muſt be conſidered by thoſe who have been in the Weſt-Indies, or who have read the evidence before parliament, as a piece of impertinence not worth anſwering. But, if you will come before the public a ſecond time, and attempt to prove that farmers never abuſe their horſes, never entruſt them to their ſervants, never kill them when worn out; and, moreover, that a horſe and an African are animals ſo near alike, that we have as much right to enſlave the one as to ſaddle the other, then I will reaſon with you upon your own grounds.

There may poſſibly be a few perſons in London who die in conſequence of oppreſſion, or who are murdered. But to ſay, that the number of injured ghoſts who plant thorns on the pillows of their oppreſſors, amounts to three-

three-fourths of the robuſt young men who come from the country for employ, is to talk madly. The bare aſſertion of ſuch nonſenſe, unſupported by evidence, indicates a mind either deſperately weak, or deſperately wicked.

You affirm that the pamphlet proves too much, conſequently proves nothing; and, in confirmation of your poſition, you alledge, "That the goſpel was propagated by the blood of its firſt votaries, the proteſtant religion by the ſame means. Muſt we, therefore, deſpiſe Chriſtianity, renounce proteſtantiſm?" In order to derive any advantage from this left-handed logic, it is neceſſary you ſhould prove, that the propagators of the goſpel themſelves violated the rights and liberties of one ſet of men, in order to obtain an article called the goſpel, to ſell for their own emolument to another. You ought farther to ſtate that though this goſpel was higly grateful to the receiver, it was what might be diſpenſed with without injury; and that, by a continual purchaſe of this goſpel, you were continually creating freſh crimes, and continually rewarding the criminals. Had you ſtated the matter thus clearly, to the way-faring man, though a fool, your goſpel would have appeared ſo odious, that if his heart was not harder than adamant, I am perſuaded he would have rejected it.

With reſpect to our conſumption of other luxuries procured by ſlavery, we may perhaps be reprehenſible; but ſurely our minds have not arrived to that perfection of depravity, which emboldens men in the commiſſion of one crime, from a conſciouſneſs that they daily commit half a dozen. By the bye, it is quite a miſtake that all the produce of the Eaſt-Indies, and that all the gold and ſilver we uſe, is the production of ſlaves. And although it has been faſhionable to abuſe the ſervants of the Eaſt-India Company, yet it will be recorded by hiſtory, that there once exiſted a parliament which exhibited Articles of Impeachment againſt an individual for peculation and cruelty, and yet made

laws for the continuation of kidnapping, and ſet a price upon the heads of victims yet unborn. You ſtrive hard to confound free, with compulſive labour; and to betray the people of this country into an opinion, that ſlavery and toil are ſynonymous terms. The reaſon is obvious, the people of England are inured to labour, and do not conſider it an hardſhip; but they are accuſtomed to receive the reward of that labour; nor can they brook the idea of one man toiling at the diſcretion, and for the advantage of another. When once the people of England have ſeen the nakedneſs of ſlavery, thoſe who now burn incenſe on her altars, will ſoon ſing *requiems* to her ſoul.

Britiſh miners in particular, will not thank you for calling them under-ground ſlaves; nor for drawing a compariſon between them and Africans. But, as you ſay their ſituation "ſeems unenviable even to a Weſt-India ſlave," I can recommend an experiment which will furniſh you with the moſt authentic intelligence on that head. The ladies in the Weſt-Indies have a happy dexterity in ſlipping off their ſhoes, and beating the heels of them about the heads of their negroes. Now, with a very little practice upon your bed-poſt or dreſſing table, you will make a tolerable proficiency in the art. If ever afterwards you have an opportunity of viſiting Newcaſtle or Kingſwood, put your experiment in practice upon the head of the firſt collier you meet, and depend upon it, you will ſoon arrive at an abſolute certainty about the comparative happineſs of a free miner and a ſlave.

It is worthy of remark, that the mode you have adopted of ſupporting your cauſe, by mutilated portions of ſcripture, is the very ſame artifice which the devil made uſe of when he tempted Jeſus Chriſt to commit ſuicide. Strange! that the wiſdom of the ſerpent ſhould ſuit your purpoſe better than the innocence of the dove. But, there is nothing new under the ſun; the

the agency of similar causes will always be exerted to produce similar effects. As long as error is supported, scripture must be perverted.

As it does not signify what the conquering Israelites were allowed to do in the devoted land of Canaan, I shall leave you, "naturally to suppose" what you please, and to be as wise above what is written as you please, where our question is not concerned, while I proceed to examine that counsel which you have darkened by words, or rather by stripping it of those words with which it was connected. Our Lord, you say, declared that nothing which went into a man could defile a man. And pray who ever said it could? Certainly, not the person to whose address you have written what you call an answer. He never said that saccharine matter of any kind, whether eaten with unwashen hands or not, was capable of communicating that defilement which the tradition of the elders making the commandment of God of none effect, had conjured up. He never entered upon the question to my knowledge. Therefore, how any part of that controversy can apply to his argument, is as much above my comprehension, as the curious piece of intelligence with which you immediately follow it up, is too extensive an article for my little faith, viz. "That every thing which went into the body at that time was altogether prepared by slaves." As this is not one of the things which you "*naturally suppose*," but which you roundly assert, ought you not to give the world an opportunity of deriving their knowledge from the same unsullied current of history by which it is transmitted to you? Can you not inform us who were the owners of Martha and her sister Mary? who were the owners of the apostolic fishermen? and why they permitted them to wander about with such an unpopular character as Jesus Christ, without once sending the jumper after them, or setting a price upon their heads, as your friends in the West-Indies often do? When the world is satisfied about these particulars, perhaps the society

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of antiquarians may elect you a member of their order, or the Creolean literati give you a name, and a place in the Mythology of tropical divinity. But ſhould it appear that your information is only the ipſa dixit of a vain woman, you have no reaſon to feel hurt, if your word ſhould ceaſe to be regarded, or be regarded only with ſuſpicion.

The next portion of ſcripture, which you wreſt to ſuit your own purpoſe, is of the ſame nature with the firſt. Our Lord, being at dinner with a Phariſee, his hoſt "marvelled" that he did not perform the cuſtomary ablution. On this occaſion he received the following ſharp reproof: "Now do ye Phariſees make clean the outſide of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedneſs. Ye fools! did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within alſo? But rather give alms of ſuch things as ye have; and, behold all things are clean unto you." Your making the precept general, without preſuppoſing the thing poſſeſſed equitably obtained, would make ſociety unbearable. Men might make fortunes by rapine and ſlaughter, then give alms of ſuch things as they had; *and, according to your expoſition*, all would be clean unto them; for Jeſus ſaid ſo in direct and general terms.

The apoſtles, you ſay, give ſimilar directions, "Only to let our moderation be known, and that every thing is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer." Oh! the adroitneſs with which you manufacture a text! You are as expert in ſplicing the fagg ends of different epiſtles together, as in paring the rough edges from a portion of ſcripture, which you tear from its connexion. The apoſtle, indeed, recommends moderation in general terms; but from the mere circumſtance of his ſo ſpeaking, it is impoſſible he ſhould have in view any particular action of life, the propriety of which was doubted. With reſpect to the latter clauſe of your queſtion,

queſtion, it relates to thoſe abuſes which would come to paſs in the latter days, through the influence of thoſe who would depart from the faith, and forbid marriage, and the uſe of meats, not becauſe they were diſhoneſtly obtained, but ſimply on their own account. Now, in this point of view, nothing is to be refuſed; but every thing is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer. "Meat commendeth us not to God!" Pray, who ever ſaid it did? "*Therefore*"—Not quite ſo fait with your "*Therefore*." The world muſt be informed that you are ſtriding over nearly three chapters, and that your friend, "*Therefore*," by whoſe aid you fill up the chaſm, is a creature of your own formation. The text reads thus: "Whatever is ſold in the ſhambles, that eat, aſking no queſtions, for conſcience-ſake. For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof. If any of them that believe not, bid you to a feaſt, and ye be diſpoſed to go, whatſoever is ſet before you, eat, aſking no queſtion for conſcience-ſake. But if any man ſay unto you, this is offered in ſacrifice unto idols, eat not, for his ſake that ſhewed it, and for conſcience-ſake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof." Now, by attending to the ſenſe of the author, we ſee that the diſpute in queſtion was about meat offered to idols, and not about the propriety of purchaſing goods fraudulently or violently obtained. Your expoſition affects the moral character both of Chriſt and his apoſtles; as it repreſents them appointing receptacles for ſtolen goods, and encouraging the diſciples to gobble down any man's property, provided it was expoſed for ſale in the public market, even though they were aware that the perſon with whom they dealt was an habitual thief, and the property they purchaſed moſt commonly ſtolen.

You reſt ſatisfied in the idea, that you have diſproved what nobody attempted to eſtabliſh; that "Abſtinence from the ſugar-cane is no part of a Chriſtian's duty."

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The author of the addreſs never ſaid it was. He only urges it as a duty, " To abſtain from the uſe of the ſugar-cane *till we can have it unconnected with ſlavery, and unpolluted with blood.*" Our abſtinence, you ſay, will do no good, " The Iſlands are to declare their independence, and find a vent for their goods in ſome other market." But to ſhew the world that you have not undertaken to give lectures upon a commerce of which you were entirely ignorant, be ſo kind, next time you write, as to inform us, how the produce of our iſlands is to find a vent in foreign markets? Already we pay ſo large a bounty to force it abroad, that were half the quantity of our imported ſugar to be re-exported, nearly the whole of the revenue derived from that article would ceaſe. And when we conſider, that the bounty is not a new thing, and that even by its aſſiſtance our planters were not able to re-export any large quantity of their imported goods, before the diſturbances in the French iſlands—when we recollect that America will ſoon ſupply herſelf with ſugar from the maple tree, that the Eaſt India Company will in a great meaſure ſupply the German market; that Spain, Portugal, Holland, and Denmark, have ſugar colonies of their own; that the ſugar of Sierra Leona will be driven abroad by an unnatural alien duty; and when we call to mind, that England is almoſt the only country where rum is uſed, we would fain know in what ſequeſtered corner of the globe the Weſt Indian is to find a market for the fruits of his oppreſſion, when the diſturbances in the French iſlands ſhall ceaſe, or when Parliament ſhall ceaſe to reward his iniquity from the public treaſury? Is he to barter them for cat-ſkins at Nootka Sound? or will the Greenlander receive them in exchange for blubber?

" But ſugar (you continue) is ſtyled a luxury; and the covetous man will readily adopt the language, becauſe, by denying his family an expenſive article, he can make a ſure ſaving." Such paltry ſlander is as innocent

innocent as its author is contemptible. In the subsequent sentence, indeed, you acquit us of the crime of avarice, by allowing, that although we refuse the West India sugar, we purchase that from the East at an exorbitant price. But the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. We are rescued from the whip, to be chastised with scorpions. We are accused of straining at gnats, while we swallow camels. What is the import of the accusation, I neither know myself, nor have I been able to find any one who could inform me. As there can be no crime in receiving the produce of free labour, such as East India sugar, you must certainly mean, that the people who reject the produce of robbery and murder, indulge themselves in the commission of crimes of deeper dye without remorse. If this is your meaning, either point out your man, and point out his crimes, or else repent you of the sin of bearing false witness against your neighbour. You inform us, that "No large commercial country, no grand monarchical form of government, ever was, or ever will be, supported without luxuries." Whether they were or not, I shall not contend, as our question is not, whether we ought to live luxuriously or frugally; but, whether we be justified in transporting men in chains from one country, to be tortured for the gratification of our appetites in another? Should this question be answered in the negative, I ask, why you tempt another to do what you would not do yourself? Why you join a croud, to do what you would not do alone? Why you reward iniquity by purchasing an article procured by the perpetual accession of fresh crimes? You answer, "God has left us free—debarring ourselves from the West Indian cane is will-worship, and, like every other instance of voluntary humility, has a tendency to defile the conscience, and darken the understanding." If the voluntary humility, the worshipping of angels, and the apparent wisdom in the will-worship of human tradition, against which the Colossians were warned, have a tendency to defile the conscience, and darken the understanding,

ſtanding, ſurely the apparent folly and voluntary arrogance with which you pervert the ſacred writings, betray ſtrong ſymptoms of a conſcience already defiled, an underſtanding already darkened.

With reſpect to diviſions among Chriſtians, they are certainly diſagreeable, when they occur: but they muſt not be averted, by ſacrificing the repoſe of conſcience. However, you foretel, that he that eateth not, will judge him that eateth, &c. It is ſtrange, that all through the argument you cannot help talking about *eating!* Like the miſer's cook of Moliere, the only words in your mouth are, *eat, eat, eat,* although your queſtion has no more reference to eating, than it has to riding on horſeback; but relates ſimply to the propriety or impropriety of *receiving* goods improperly obtained. If the ſtaple commodity of the Weſt Indies had been apparel, inſtead of food, what ſcripture would you have perverted then? As the caſe is, may we not hope for a text or two in vindication of the uſe of rum? Would not our Lord's ſacramental invitation, "Drink ye all "of it," and the apoſtolic declaration, "the ſpirit "giveth life," when properly tacked together, after your mode, be admirably explicit?

As to the ruin of trade, and the train of dreadful conſequences, that is to follow our abſtinence, that is nothing to us. If the produce of the labour of ſlaves is not equitable property, it is our duty to refuſe it; and our acceptance of it is criminal: or elſe, why are men puniſhed for receiving ſtolen goods?

Before you called your book An Anſwer to the Addreſs, you ſhould have diſproved the poſition, That, "*As the planter has no right to the perſon of the ſlave, he "can have no right to his labour, or to the produce of it.*" Had you done that, the controverſy would have been nearly decided, unleſs we are to do "a real evil on the "vague ſuppoſition that good may come." As to the

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ſtate of freedom in which you urge God has left us, if it is the liberty of doing actions which tend to the enſlaving of others, it looks more like the bondage of iniquity, than the glorious liberty of the children of God.

In your libel on the army you affirm, that "a ſoldier is deprived of all the benefit of the laws of his country —that he is an abſolute ſlave,—that he is ſold by the wretch who firſt betrays him,—and that if ever he attempts to emancipate himſelf (that is, to deſert), he is ſhot like a mad dog." In ſhort, you conclude your *ſublime climax* by ſaying, that forcing an hundred young men into the army, "might be as bad as being the remote cauſe of enſlaving an hundred Africans." That the pay of the army is much too ſmall, and its puniſhments much too ſevere, cannot be denied. But that a ſoldier is deprived of all the benefit of the laws of his country, is one of the groſſeſt falſehoods that ever diſgraced the Preſs. The records of the Old Bailey lamentably prove, that he is allowed trial by jury. And the records of Weſtminſter-hall are not devoid of inſtances, to ſhew that a ſoldier may inſtitute a civil action, even againſt his officer.

As you tell us, ſoldiers "are abſolute ſlaves, and are often ſold," can you not inform us where the ſales are kept? I ſhould imagine they muſt be by *very* private contract, as I never heard of a lot of grenadiers being knocked down by Chriſtie, or any other gentleman of the hammer. With reſpect to their being ſhot like mad dogs, for deſertion, I think you would find it difficult to produce half a dozen inſtances in point, for the laſt twenty years.

As this horrid picture of the Britiſh army is ſhewn by way of extenuation of colonial tyranny, I ſhall draw ſuch a compariſon between them as I am able to do from my own knowledge and obſervation. The ſoldier,

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before he is such, hears where his regiment lies, and the name of his commander; knows the pay, and thinks he can live upon it. He is offered a bounty, and accepts it. He is allowed four days for reflection; if he repents his engagement, he pays twenty shillings, returns the money he has received, and is discharged. But if he likes the service, he goes before a magistrate, swears he was fairly enlisted, that he has received his bounty, that he is a protestant, that he has heard the articles of war read, and that he will be a good soldier. If he is sent to the West Indies (where we must certainly send him, for the sake of comparison), he is first clothed, and provided with bedding; he has full liberty on board the ship which transports him; and when he arrives at his destined station, he is lodged in dry and comfortable barracks; he is well fed, well clad, and his pay continued, not unfrequently with an addition to it from the island. He has very little to do, except the morning exercise; and if he is employed as a mechanic, he receives extra wages. He cannot be punished, but for a crime expressed in the articles of war; and when punished, by the sentence of a court-martial, a surgeon attends, who may remit such part of the punishment as he thinks him unable to bear without injury to his constitution. He may even bring his general to a court-martial, and the evidence of his peers is admitted. When superannuated or disabled, he receives a pension, which, if insufficient for his support, he may resign to the officers of his parish, and they must maintain him.

Would God this were the case with the wretched African. A sad reverse, alas! is fact. Before he was a slave, he tilled his little patch of ground, planted it with yams, or sowed it with rice; and felt a reward within his simple breast, from a consciousness that he was providing for his little family, who contributed their tiny pittance to the honey of the hive, by scaring the feathered plunderers from the ripening crop. A few hours daily labour supplied his every want; the remainder

mainder was devoted to hoſpitality, and merriment and joy. He welcomed his friends with the eaſy politeneſs of nature, ſeated them on the turf, and was almoſt inſtantly at the ſummit of the ſtately palm-tree that waved its majeſtic leaves contiguous to his hut. Thence quick deſcending, laden with delicious wine, he filled the callabaſh of each contented gueſt, whoſe ſupple limbs, obedient to his rude *banjay**, began the athletic dance, while the animated chorus of unaffected voices inſpired a chearfulneſs of which the formal ſons of European feſtivity can form no adequate conception. But, ah! ſenators have no bowels of compaſſion. The happineſs of Africans muſt be ſacrificed at the ſhrine of their avaricious policy. They have legalized murder. They have aſcertained the quantum of miſery it is expedient to inflict. They have dared to ſet a price upon the heads of innocents, who never did them an injury, who never ſought a connection with them, who never even heard of their country, or their colour. Corrupted by their gold, and ſanctioned by their authority, the ſons of violence are on their way. Their emiſſaries are ſitting in the lurking places of the villages, and lying in wait ſecretly to catch the poor. They catch our African. A yoke is put upon his neck, and he is goaded to the ſhips. The price of his blood being agreed upon, he is ſhackled to another victim of European cruelty, and thruſt under deck. The recollection of his country and his friends drives him to deſpair. He cannot think why he is torn from them, why the wretches who have laden him with chains, are deſirous that he ſhould eat; he cannot account for their brutal kindneſs; he concludes they mean to fatten him, in order to feaſt upon him at a convenient ſeaſon. He reſolves to circumvent their deſigns; he refuſes food: he is whipt to make him eat; but the indignant firmneſs

* An inſtrument ſomewhat like a guittar. Its uſe is prohibited in ſome parts of the Weſt Indies. Perhaps from an idea that it is ſuperfluous in thoſe lands of *ſuperior felicity*.

of his mind is not to be ſubdued by the laſh. The *ſpeculum oris* * is reſorted to; a broken tooth gives an opportunity for its introduction; his mouth is forced open, rice is crammed down his throat, and he is compelled to live. He arrives at the Weſt Indies, and is ſold. He now depends upon the will of an individual for his all. He is now in a country where all nature conſpires againſt him, where babes are taught to liſp, "that the worſt white is better than the beſt black." He has now no legal protection againſt his maſter. He is even under the abſolute controul of an hireling, who has no intereſt in his life. His maſter's name may be branded in his fleſh with hot irons, and all the while he may be allowed the character of a good ſlave. But ſhould he bend reluctantly to his fate, the horrid cart-whip would make long furrows in his fleſh; his lacerated body would be waſhed with brine or ſea-water; he might even be tortured with melted wax, or boiling ſyrup; and any white man might kill him with impunity, as the united teſtimony of a thouſand of his peers would not be conſidered as evidence by a Weſt India court of *in*juſtice. When ſuperannuated, he may be deſerted by the wretch who has waſted the vigour of his youth; and when periſhing with hunger, he may be inſulted, by being told that he is free.

After all your boaſted chriſtianity, you at laſt unmaſk, and tell us, "Charity *ſhould* begin at home." *Your* charity, my good Lady, may *begin* at home, and *end* at home, *and ſtay at home* for ever. The world will be no loſer. But genuine charity prompts its poſſeſſor to embrace ten thouſand worlds, then melts him into tears, becauſe he can graſp no more.

You ſeriouſly caution us againſt "affecting too much pity for ſtrangers, and being too clamorous againſt Weſt India avarice, cruelty, and oppreſſion," merely becauſe

* An inſtrument with which they force open the mouths of ſuch ſlaves as refuſe to eat.

we

we have abuſes at home. That we *have* abuſes at home, nobody will deny. But, that either the author of the Addreſs, or any of his proſelytes, " applaud or approve the enſlaving of tens of thouſands of our brethren, merely on the doctrine of neceſſity," is an exploſion of that arrogance which you palm upon the world inſtead of argument.

That we ſhall quietly go to ſleep, till the lordly Creole himſelf ſhall deign to proclaim " liberty to the captive," is one of thoſe pleaſing reveries I cannot adviſe you to indulge.

As Britons, we are jealous leſt the chains which are forged for Africans, at the extremities of the empire, ſhould be rivetted on our necks at its centre.

As men, who feel the indignity offered to our ſpecies, by the continuance of the ſlave trade *in the very teeth of evidence*, we ſhould be aſhamed to act the part of children, and accept a paltry junket as a ſuccedaneum for that juſtice which we demand for the whole human race.

As Chriſtians, we conceive there is ſuch a thing as moral principle, and that the Holy Scriptures, taken in their obvious, natural ſenſe, are to be the rule of our conduct. We find it an univerſal maxim of the New Teſtament, that Chriſtians ought to have " no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather to reprove them." We conceive, that ſuch actions as are contrary to the ſpirit of the goſpel, *are* works of darkneſs. We think that detaining juſt men in ſlavery, is contrary to the ſpirit of the goſpel. Therefore, we ought to reprove it: and this we do not to the utmoſt of our power, unleſs we refrain from it ourſelves—reprimand it in others—avoid any act which we think may induce another to purſue it—reject the pleaſures and profits which immediately accrue from it—and uſe every lawful means to prevent it.

By

By way of extreme unction to your expiring cauſe, you ſuggeſt the idea, that our combination looks very much like perſecution; that the planters will think themſelves perſecuted.

What Guinea pirates or Weſt India planters may ſay or think, can be of very little importance to honeſt, diſintereſted men. "They have had their good things;" and the poor victims of their avarice, "their evil things." It is time *they* ſhould be comforted, even though their oppreſſors ſhould be tormented.

When Mr. Palmer's plan for conveying the mail was firſt agitated, you did not call *that* doing evil, that good might come, (at leaſt not from the preſs.) You did not then urge, that many children were employed in driving, and many mechanics in conſtructing the wretched wheelbarrows by which letters were then conveyed. You did not even think of the poor innkeepers, coach-maſters, and others, who had employed large capitals in travelling accommodations. Much leſs did you think of calling that tradeſman a perſecutor who refuſed to negociate a bill, or to purchaſe a caſket of diamonds, which had been ſtolen from a public conveyance. You never ſuggeſted the argument, that, "all the means and manner of carrying on buſineſs belonged to the man himſelf, and was what his cuſtomers had nothing to do with." Why, then, is our abſtinence from the produce of ſlavery called perſecution? Is it leſs a crime to rob a man of liberty than of property? or, are the generality of perſons concerned in the ſlave-trade, more honourable characters than the generality of highwaymen?

I ſhall conclude this letter by confirming, as far as the influence of my word extends, the general tenor of the evidence laid before the Houſe of Commons on colonial ſlavery. I know one of the perſons, who is mentioned to have committed ſome acts of atrocity; and, from her general character, I ſhould conceive them true.

I have

I have myſelf ſeen a negro whipt, at the mandate of a drunken tyrant, till he could not ſit down, ignorant of the crime of which he was accuſed, and which, it afterwards turned out, he had not committed.

I have ſeen a white woman ſuperintend the puniſhment of one of her own ſex, provided with a horſe-whip, for the purpoſe of beating the negro whipper when he did not ſtrike hard enough.

I have been waited upon, at the houſe of a lady in Antigua, by a female ſlave in a ſtate of nature.

I have heard an overſeer declare, that the beſt mode of ſeaſoning a negro, is to give him nine-and-thirty laſhes ſoon after he comes upon an eſtate, to make him know where he is. I have heard the ſame wretch boaſt, that once, he vexed his driver, by compelling him to flog the female with whom he cohabited.

I have ſeen, in moſt of our iſlands, crouds of negroes, half naked, and apparently half ſtarved, generally diſfigured by the cart-whip, and not unfrequently in chains.

I have ſeen, with indignation, the little pittance of their Sunday's labour wreſted from their hands by the indigent whites; and only ſuch a price paid for it as the purchaſer thought proper to affix.

I have known many inſtances of their being ſent from one iſland to another, merely for the convenience of their maſters. I have, on theſe occaſions, ſeen the deareſt relatives realize the agonies of deſpair, from a conſciouſneſs that they were to meet no more.

I have ſeen them lingering in a dungeon for the inſolvency of their maſters.

I have

I have known a miſerable, deſerted Lazarus inſulted by his owner, only for aſking for a morſel of bread.

I do not mean to deny, that I have known negroes contented and happy. When their kind fate places them as domeſtics under the roof of a humane maſter, it is often the caſe. Theſe ſolitary inſtances are made the moſt of by the advocates for ſlavery. But when I recollect the ſeverity I have ſeen practiſed by men of the greateſt humanity, in paroxyſms of rage or intoxication—when I reflect, that, in caſe of inſolvency, a ſlave may lie for weeks in a dungeon, and afterwards take his chance for a good maſter at a public auction—I cannot conceive that a few exceptions prove any thing againſt the general miſery of colonial ſlavery.

For offences not cognizable by individuals, the code of laws for the puniſhment of ſlaves proves more effectually than a thouſand arguments, that the Weſt Indians are a ſanguinary, brutal, vindictive race. For ſtriking a white man, the hand of a ſlave is cut off. For inſurrection, almoſt all our iſlands abound with inſtances of their being *gibbeted, and even roaſted alive*..

In Chriſtmas, 1781, at Antigua, two ſlaves killed a ſcoundrel who had deprived them of their holidays, and otherwiſe ill treated them. The hand of the principal was chopped off, before he was put to death.

If ever ſuch ſavage inhumanity was neceſſary, it was inflicted with a very bad grace, in a country where white men had frequently been puniſhed with impriſonment and a ſmall fine, for the murder of negroes. In vain do we hope for individual reformation in the Weſt Indies. It is not to be expected in a country where an exertion of law is an exertion of brutality. Nor ſhould it excite our ſurpriſe, when we behold that latent ſpark of liberty which had been ſtifled, but not extin-

extinguiſhed, burſt into a devouring flame, and prompt an injured race to break their chains promiſcuouſly upon the heads of the innocent and the guilty. If we would radically cure theſe evils, let us teach governments humanity. Let us recover *our* dignity, and Africans will recover *their* liberty. Let us loſe ſight of the intereſt of *tyrants*, and *not* continue to be cannibals from motives of compaſſion.

Let our united efforts beſpeak the ſincerity of our ſouls, and let us hail the ſoft effulgence of that dawn of liberty, which in deſpite of hell, ſhall riſe to meridian ſplendour, and, with undiminiſhed blaze, diſpenſe its genial influence from pole to pole, till time ſhall be no more.

I am,

Madam,

Yours, &c.

RICHARD HILLIER.

SURRY,
November 14th, 1791.

FINIS.